

Dear Martin ^{Mc}Carlantonio,

2/8/90

Hasty and partial response to your 2/3.

A Hove/list does have the liberties you state but when he treats with actual events, does this give him the liberty to mislead and misrepresent?

I see no possibility of an assassination involvement by either umbrella-holding man and I know nothing about the man on the south side of 4th St.

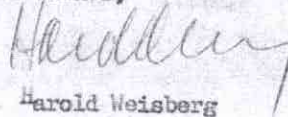
Unless you disagree, what difference does any of the extensive amount of nonsense make? Moreover, I know of no reason to not believe Witt's testimony. He did not take the initiative in becoming known.

I consider that my taking any more time for this wastes that time. Sorry.

Besides, if you are going to do anything with a fiction, why not make your own up?

If you ever have access to the Warren Commission appendix volumes, you can see the second umbrella in the Zapruder film, the frame of which it published.

Best wishes,



Harold Weisberg



February 3, 1990

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

Thank you for your instructive remarks in response to my letter of 1/20. No offense taken, I assure you. I readily admit my ignorance of the facts surrounding the Kennedy assassination. I've read about half a dozen books on the subject so far, and frankly the more I read, the more confused I become. I certainly don't consider myself an expert on the subject, just an interested reader (and someone who is shocked that a crime of such magnitude could have been committed without anyone being brought to justice for it).

I'm afraid I may have been guilty of using the word "researchers" a bit loosely. The books I've read so far have been highly uneven in quality. Six Seconds in Dallas and Best Evidence were, it seemed to me, honest and thought-provoking books, the work of legitimate investigators. More recent books (which I turned to in an attempt to get the "latest" on the umbrella man) have been less satisfying. One of them--a book called High Treason--was almost laughable in parts. And Marris' book was generally disappointing.

The significance of your work in assassination literature is only now becoming apparent to me. (It's taken me about a year-and-a-half of unsystematic reading to find you.) I'm well aware that some "researchers" have exploited the Kennedy assassination for their own purposes, contributing, as you put it, to the "unofficial mythology," and I certainly didn't mean to lump you in with them. If my letter gave that impression, I do apologize.

My interest in the umbrella man is simply to find out whether he has been identified or not. Marris' discussion of Witt seemed, to someone of my limited knowledge, one of the more credible parts of his book. He cited Witt's testimony before the HSCA, to the effect that he was struggling to open the umbrella as the limousine passed and never actually saw the president get shot. If that's in fact what Witt said, it does seem implausible, considering the perfectly attentive pose of the umbrella man who appears in the photographs. And Witt's explanation of the nature of the political statement he was trying to make by holding an open umbrella was suspiciously vague, according to Marris.

I took these statements at face value and concluded that the identity of the real umbrella man was still a mystery. Obviously, you have good reason to believe Witt's testimony was plausible. If you should ever have the time or the inclination to explain why to me, I would be most interested in hearing what you have to say on the matter. But I understand you have other priorities and only so much energy to devote to questions like these. I appreciate your taking the time to even bother to respond to my first letter, considering that you were recuperating from surgery. (I hope you are doing better now and that you are well on the road to recovery.)

So that you might not think me a total idiot, I would like to make one point clear. I do not for one minute subscribe to the theory that the umbrella man was a conspirator, either as a dart-firing assailant or as a signalman of some sort. That strikes me as utter nonsense. The novel I'm working on assigns him no such role. He is more of a mythic character, an everyman, mysteriously anonymous, as I see him. Whether Louis Witt was in fact the umbrella man doesn't really matter (although it would be nice to nail it down one way or the other). Novelists are free to take liberties with historical events, so long as they don't presume to be recreating the truth, what really happened. My novel is deliberately surrealistic, inspired (if that is the word) by something I read somewhere about a part of the Warren Report being devoted to the dreams of several eyewitnesses to the assassination, highly questionable content for a government investigation but rich fodder for a fiction writer.

I look forward to reading your books. I've enclosed a check for two insured copies of Post Mortem and Photographic Whitewash.

Sincerely,



Martin DiCarlantonio

P.S. I didn't know there was a second umbrella man in Dealey Plaza. I don't suppose you could tell me anything about him. (Was he another open umbrella man or the closed variety?)